MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RI	SOURCE NAME: Gil	lis-Grie	er House	
M	HT INVENTORY NUMBER	R:WI-13	3	
M	ARYLAND COMPREHEN	SIVE PLAI	N DATA	
1.	Historic Period Theme(s):	Archited	cture	e.,
2.	Geographic Orientation:	Eastern	Shore	
3.	Chronological/Development	Period(s):	Industrial-Urban 1870-1930	Dominance
4.	Resource Type(s):	Single-f	Eamily dwelling	

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. WI-13

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

1. Nam	e (indicate pro	eferred name)		
historic	James Cannon Ho	ouse Gill	is-Grier House	
and/or common				
2. Loca	ation			
street & number	401 North Divs	ion Street		not for publication
city, town	Salisbury	vicinity of	congressional district	First
state	Maryland	county	Wicomico	
3. Clas	sification			
Category district _X_ building(s) structure site object	Ownership public _X_ private both Public Acquisition in process being considered _X_ not_applicable	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted	Present Use	museum mu
4. Own	er of Proper	ty (give names ar	nd mailing addresse	es of <u>all</u> owners)
name	Mr. and Mrs. Ha	rry Levanthal		
street & number	401 North Divis	sion Street	telephone n	0.:
city, town	Salisbury	state	and zip code MD	21801
5. Loca	tion of Lega	al Description	n	
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc. Wi	comico County C	lerk of Court	Map 107, P. 678 liber 838
street & number	Wicomico Cour	ty Courthouse		folio 891
city, town	Salisbury		state	MD 21801
6. Repr	esentation	in Existing	Historical Surv	reys
title	Maryland Inve	ntory of Histori	c Properties	
date	1970		federal Xstat	te county local
apository for sur	rvey records Maryl	and Historical T	rust	
city, town	Crownsville		state	MD 21032

7.	Description		Survey No.	MT-1
_		Observations		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Gillis-Grier house is located at 401 North Division Street in the center of the Newtown Historic District in Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland. The two-and-a-half story Queen Anne style frame dwelling faces west with the steeply pitched hip roof oriented on an east/west axis.

Built in 1887, the two-and-a-half story Queen Anne frame house follows an asymmetrical plan with gable-front elevations on three sides and a three-story octagonal tower on the southwest corner. Attached to the back of the main block is a shorter two-and-half story service wing. The house is clad with a combination of German siding and patterned fishscale shingles and decorative woodwork. The steeply pitched hip and gable roofs are covered with patterned slate.

The west (main) elevation is a complex facade of asymmetrical design. A two-and-a-half story gable-front wall is juxtaposed against the three-story tower that is capped by a concave curved conical roof also sheathed in slate. The first floor is sheltered by a turned post porch that wraps around the north, west and south sides. Fixed between the posts is turned baluster railing. The turned post porch shelters a double door entrance and flanking single-pane sash windows. Marking the entrance bay on the porch is a cross gable distinguished by a variety of applied decoration and a peak finial. The window to the north is part of a three-sided bay window. On the south side the porch roof extends to the edge of the three-story tower, which has a square sided first story filled with colored glass upper sash windows. The porch floor and turned baluster railing continue on a circular curve to a cross-gabled side porch. The second and third floors of the tower have an octagonal shape. On the second floor each side is pierced by a single-pane sash window, while the third floor has sash windows alternating with decorative panels.

The second floor of the main house is defined on its west side by a variety of window openings. The northwest corner is defined by a turned post and short section of turned baluster railing and a window piercing a cut or chamfered corner of the house. Centered under the gable-front is a tripartite composition of eighteen-over-one sash windows. Piercing the wall between the tripartite window group and the southwest tower is a single one-over-one sash window. The gable end is covered with a layer of fishscale shingles and it is pierced by a tripartite series of nine-pane attic windows. The edge of the roof has an extended eave, open soffits, and a decorative bargeboard. Fixed atop the peak of the gable is a turned wooden finial. The west slope of the roof, covered with pattern slate, is marked by an off-center gabled dormer that lights the main attic, while a small triangular shaped dormer illuminates the upper attic. Rising through the roof in three locations are tall brick chimney stacks featuring inset paneled sides and corbeled caps. The north chimney incorporates the sculpture of a woman's head.

(Continued)

Period prehis 1400 1500 1700 1800 1900-	-1499 -1599 -1699 -1799 -1899	Areas of Significance archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications	oric		ity plannii ation cs n ing on/settlen	ng _ - - - nent _	law liter milit mus phile	sic	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation
Specific (dates	1887		Builder/Arch	nitect				
	ar	icable Criteria: _ nd/or icable Exception:	_	BXC	D	E	F	G	
	Leve1	l of Significance:		ational	state	<u> </u>	_local		

WI-13

Survey No.

Significance

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Singularly outstanding among the Queen Anne dwellings that define Salisbury's Newtown neighborhood is the elaborately detailed Gillis-Grier house, named after the two inter-related families that held title to the property between 1896 and 1975. While this hyphenated name recognizes the property's long-term owners, the impressively designed and crafted house was assembled for Salisbury merchant James Cannon in 1887. A short item in the July 23, 1887 issue of the *Salisbury Advertiser* announced:

James Cannon, Esq. has begun the erection of his residence on the corner of Division and William streets. Judging from the drawings it will be of the cottage style, main entrance on Division street and side entrance on William street. At the southwest corner will be a tower.¹

It is evident from this brief notice that little of the exterior had been completed by the summer of 1887 since James Cannon financed one of the most elaborate Victorian dwellings for its day in Salisbury. Dominated by a three-story tower with a conical roof of pattern slate, the sprawling hip roofed dwelling includes multiple pavilions, bay windows, and a variety of gabled dormers that provide a variety of form that is enriched with varying styles of exterior siding and applied decorations. The lively exterior is matched by equally rich interiors of late nineteenth-century design. Parquet floors on the first floor are combined with cabinet style mantels with tiled fireboxes. Spotted throughout the house are colored glass windows that provide another rich source of interior decoration to the many room interior.

James Cannon figured prominently in history and development of Salisbury following the Civil War. The first attempt to introduce a source for gas to the city involved Cannon, who, with several other businessmen, incorporated the Salisbury City Gas Company. ² He was also a member of the board of trustees for the Salisbury

¹ Salisbury Advertiser, July 23, 1887.

² Charles J. Truitt, Historic Salisbury Updated 1662-1982, Historical Books, Inc. Salisbury, Maryland, 1982, p. 217.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust Shaw House 21 State Circle Apparolis, Maryland 21401

(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST.
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

7.1 DESCRIPTION
Gillis-Grier House, WI-13
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland

The south side of the house is an asymmetrical elevation with a two-story bay window counterbalanced with the southwest corner tower. Stretching across the first floor is the turned post porch featuring a cross gable in the center bay. The porch extends eastward to the edge of a gable-roofed conservatory covered by a low pitched gable roof and enclosed with tall windows. The two-story bay window, divided by the line of the porch roof, is pierced by colored glass windows on the first floor. Centered above the two-story bay window is a cross gable that rests atop the roof and is covered with fishscale shingles and pirced by a paired eight-over-twelve sash windows. Located on the upper roof slope is another triangular dormer that illuimates the upper attic.

8.1 SIGNIFICANCE
Gillis-Grier House, WI-13
Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland

Academy, which owned property south of the intersection of North Division and Chestnut streets. This building was acquired by the Wicomico County School Commissioners and used as a high school, for which it is designated on the Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas.³ James Cannon also served on a commission to establish a recovery program following the devastating 1886 fire. Part of the commission's duties involved supervising a resurvey for the town prior to the construction of new buildings.⁴ A few years later James Cannon also provided assistance the town as part of a private board to research and install a city septic system in 1889. ⁵

In 1896 James and Lydia Cannon transferred their Newtown house to Laura A. Gillis, wife of Allison A. Gillis, a prosperous merchant who owned a wholesale grocery and produce business that was located on Dock Street (now Market Street) during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Gillis's daughter, Mamie Gillis, married Fred Grier, Jr., and they raised a family in the house. One daughter, Mamie Grier Riggin continued to reside in the house and retained ownership until 1975. ⁶

³ John L. Graham, ed. The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Wicomico Bicentennial Committee, p. 19.

⁴ Truitt, p. 110.

⁵ Truitt, p. 115.

⁶ Wicomico County Land Record, 838/891, 20 June 1975.

MHT WI-1

Fire 15-300 Muly 1969) UNITED TATES LEFARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Maryland

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

FOR NPS USE ONLY

Wicomico

II. NAME CONVON Gillis-Grier House Gil is-Grier House 2. LOCATION STREET AND NUMBER 401 North Division Street CITY OR TOWN: Salisbury COUNTY CODE Maryland 045 24 Wicomico 3. CLASSIFICATION CATEGORY ACCESSIBLE STATUS OWNERSHIP S TO THE PUBLE (Check One) Z Public Acquisition: 💆 Building Public 👿 Occupied 0 Restricted In Process Site X Privote Unoccupi**ed** Structure Unrestricted 📋 Being Considered Both Preservation wor Object ₩ No \circ PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) \supset __ Agricultural Government [Pork Transportation Commercial Industrial 😾 Private Residence Cther (Specify) α IT Military Educational GILLIS-GRIER HOUSE NEW OWNER IS: Mr. Harry Leventhal OWNER OF PROPERTY CHANGE: 401 N. Division Street Salisbury, Md. 21801 CODE

Maryland Register of	historic site	s and lan	dmarks		
DATE OF SURVEY: 1970	Federal		County	Locol	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				-	
Maryland Historical	Trust				
STREET AND NUMBER:					
94 College Avenue					
CITY OF TOWN:		15147E		c '	4 _
Annapolis		Mary	land	2	4

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24

MIN

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CONSTITUT		(Check Or	ie)		(Check One)		
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The house, built in 1887 by James Cannon, is one of the few late ninetcenth-century houses in Salisbury to have suffered virtually no changes on either the exterior or interior since it was constructed.

The Gillis-Grier House is an example of a dwelling, built in ecclectic late ninetcenth-century manner, essentially unchanged since its construction. It is on the northeast corner of North Division (formerly High Street) and East William Streets, facing North Division Street. It is a twoand-a-half story, frame building with clapboard painted cream color, and has green shutters. The brick foundation and basement cannot be seen on three sides of the building due to a porch. The porch is supported by brick piers with lattice between the piers. The building is a hip roof structure with the addition of a decorative five-sided tower with a conical roof located on the southwest corner of the building, and three cables on the north, west and south facades respectively. The extensive porch has turned columns and balustrade, a pediment above the steps to the porch at each entrance and an enclosed conservatory on the southeast side. Most of the sash are one over one, some on the first story having stain-glass panels. Two tall, brick, paneled chimneys are placed within the central part of the west half of the building, one in the north and one in the south portions. At the second story level of the northwest chimney there is a terra cotta plaque depicting a woman's head.

Dark grey slates with intermittent rows of green slates cover the main roof and the conical roof of the tower. At the ridge of the roof is an iron fence-like decoration. Capping the conical roof of the tower is a lightening fod with an iron crown. Small triangular dormer windows light. the attic.

The first-floor plan is divided by a hall, extending from the west front door to the east back door. The entrance (west) door opens into a small vestibule, then into a stair hall, the staircase of which is to the north side of a door leading to the narrow "back" hall (east). South of the stair hall is a parlor which opens into a back parlor by double sliding doors. The dining room and breakfast room and back stairs are located north of the (east) back hall. The (south) parlor and the kitchen are located south of the hall (east).

Parquet floors were installed in the 1890's by the second owner, A. A. Gillis. A fireplace in each room has tiles around the opening and cast iron throughout each fire area. Above most of the first story fireplaces are "cabinet SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Ferm 10-390a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL FARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

ETATE	
Maryland	
COUNTY	
Micomico	
FOR NPS USE ONL	Υ
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

Gillis-Grier House

#7. DESCRIPTION continued

mantels," comprised of mantel, shelf and mirror. Solid button-wood was used in constructing the double sliding door between the parlor and the stair hall. The buttonwood grain resembles "tiger" maple.

Interior shutters were used on the larger windows and many of the windows have panels of stain glass.

The entrance hall retains the original paneled wainscot and a "stick and ball" gallery around the stairwell, repeating the design of the exterior porch gallery.

The second story has a floor plan similar to the first story with the addition of two bathrooms having old-type plumbing fixtures. The four bedrooms have detail simpler than the main rooms.

Five bedrooms are located on the third story. They are finished in "the rough." Above the third story is an unfinished attic.

The brick basement walls are whitewashed and the floors are partly dirt, partly concrete.

Northeast of the house is a frame, one-and-one-half story stable, now (1971) used as a two-automobile garage. Nearby is a slate hitching post with initials "J.C." carved into the top. James Cannon was the builder of the house in 1887.

HUMITICANCE			
FERIOD (Check One of Huse no	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	18th Century	[20th Century
☐ 15th Century	17th Century	2 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE'S) (If Applica	ble end Known) 18	87	
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Appropri	ate)	
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Historic	Industry	lesophy	
Agriculture	Invention	Science	
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☐ Art	Architecture	Social Himan-	
Commerce	Literature	itorian	
Communications	Military	Theater	
Conservation	Music	Transportation	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Gillis-Grier House was built in 1887 by James Cannon; the original building permit is in the possession of the owner (1971). He owned the house for ten years before selling it, in 1897, to Allison A. Gillis. Mr. Gillis was, in 1897, owner of the B. L. Gillis & Son Wholesale Grocery in Salisbury. Later the wholesale grocery was sold to T. L. Ruar, who is now (1971) operating the same business endeavor under his own name. Mr. Fred Grier, who married the daughter of A. A. Gillis, still occupies the dwelling. Mr. Grier's father came to Salisbury from Wilmington, Delaware, in 1886, due to the fire that destroyed most of the city of Salisbury at that time. A member of the Wilrington Fire Company, he traveled to Salisbury via the "N. Y. P. & N. " Railroad (New York, Philadelphia & Norfolk) and liked the town well enough to remain and establish a home as well as establish the R. D. Grier and Son Foundry in order to produce iron.

Mr. Fred Grier, as well as his father, has been active in the development of the Salisbury Fire Department. Each has been active in the financial development of the city to the present (1971).

A small collection of memorabilia from Wicomico Countriculudes a scale model of a locomotive in use at the turn of the twentieth century on the (Delmarva) Peninsula Railroad, built by James Hastings; the steering wheel from the first gasoline-powered boat (1898) used on the Wicomico River; and a collection of license plates from 1924 to 1971, all of which are in the possession of the owner (1971).

Mrs. Harris J. Riggin, the present owner of the properties Mr. Fred Grier's daughter and is the wife of a well-known insurance agent in Salisbury.

F. MAJO: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL FEFERENCES

Recorder: Michael Bourne, Maryland Historical Trust, 94 College Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

Wicomoco County Land Records. Wicomico County Courthouse, Salisbury, Maryland.

Riggin, Mamie Grier. Interview. January 1970: Salisbury, Maryland

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WI-13 Gillis-Grier House 401 North Division Street Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland Chain of title Map 107, Parcel 678

838/891

Mamie Grier Riggin

to

6/20/1975

Harry Leventhal Elaine C. Leventhal

(said property having eventually become vested in Mamie Gillis Grier under Item Fifth of her last will and testament 7/14/1910, Will book LJG 1/462, the said Mamie Gillis Grier having since departed this life testate, Item Fifteenth 12/7/1949, JAH 9/242, devised said property unto Frederick

A. Grier, Jr. and Mamie Grier Riggin)

JTT 17/292

James Cannon Lydia Cannon

to

2/4/1896

Laura A. Gillis, wife of A. A. Gillis

\$7,000 80' 8/12" on Division Street, 170' on William Street

SPT 2/341

Levin T. H. Irving and Milton A. Parsons,

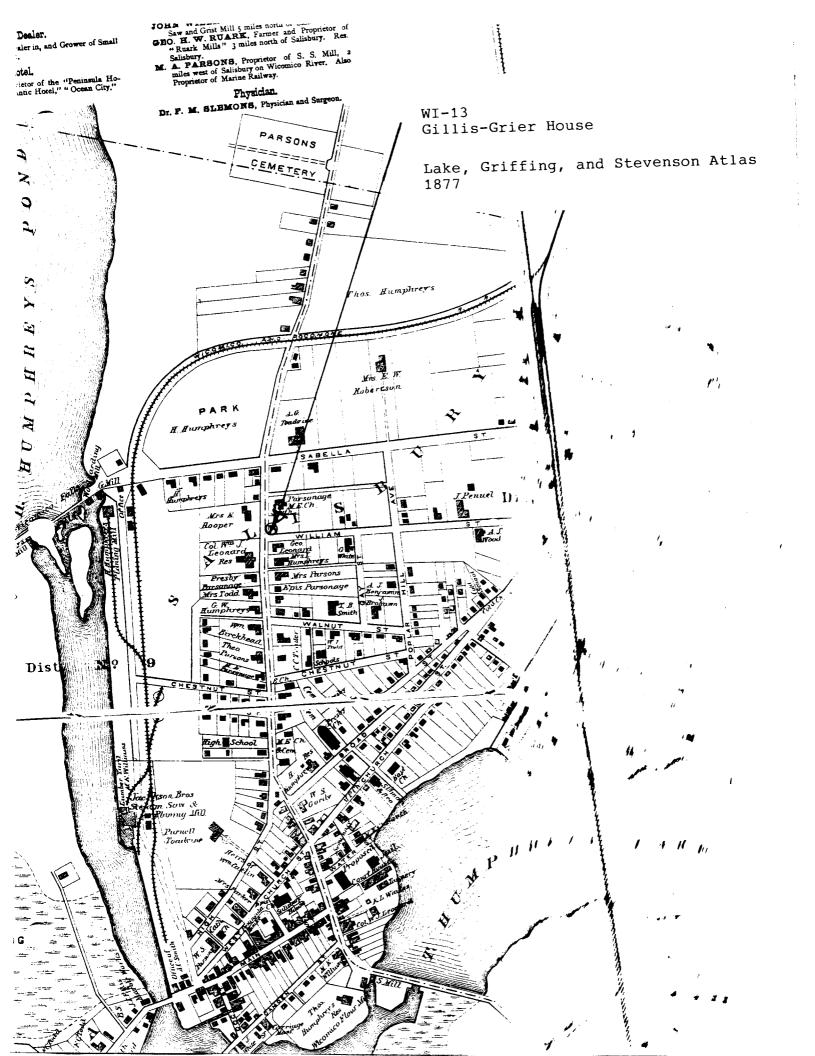
Executors of Benjamin Parsons

to

1/26/1877

James Cannon

Lot No. 2 bordering Division and William Street



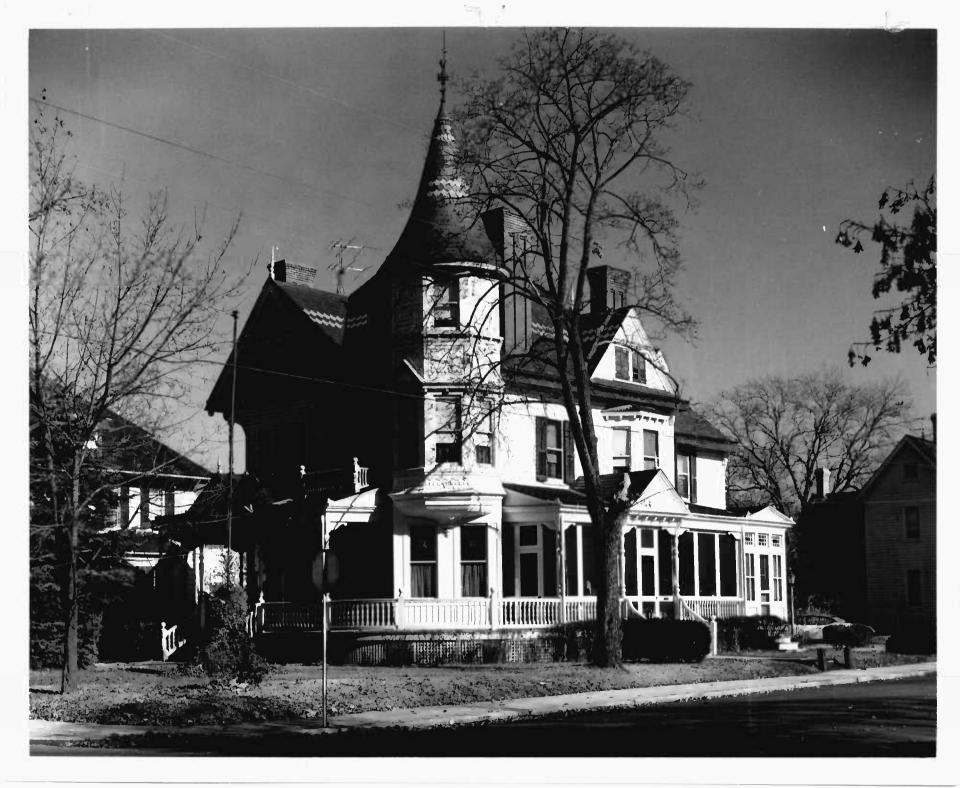
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GULIS-GREE ETERSE

SOUTHWEET - ETERST PHOTOGRAPHER

NEG, IMP ITISTUREST TRUST



MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST 2525 RIVA ROAD ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

andthouse town One Alma

michael Boure